Complete life of

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JOHNNIE RAY

A Pocket Celebrity Scrapbook

Scrapbook No. 6

The Complete Life of

JOHNNIE RAY

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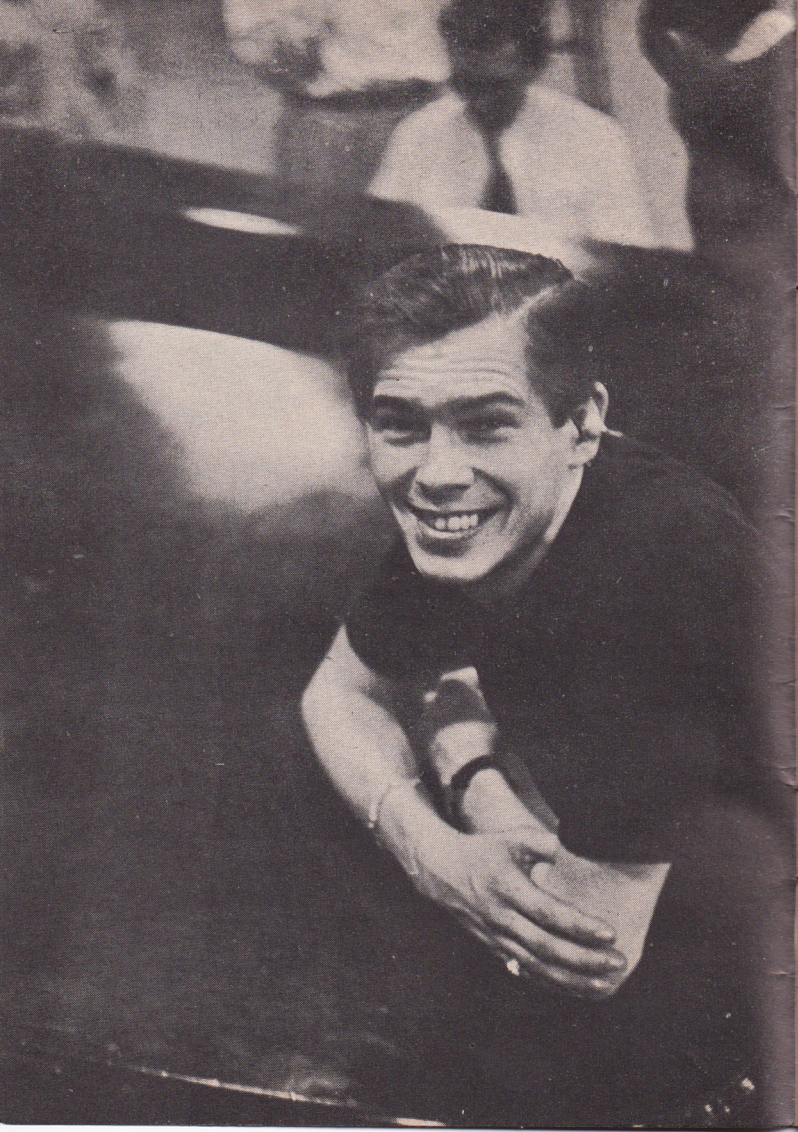

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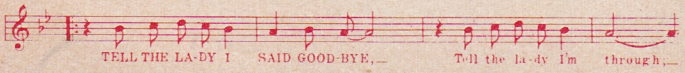
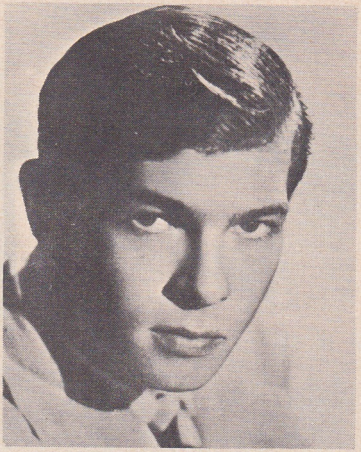


PART ONE



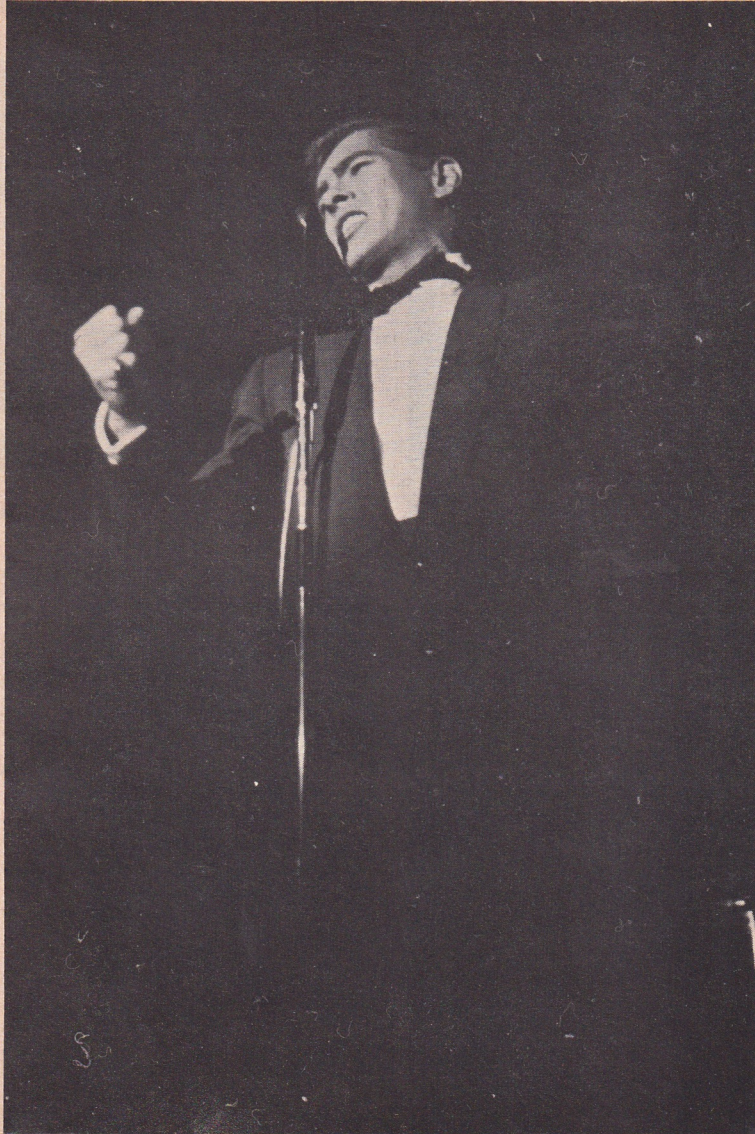
An early publicity portrait

How a Star Was Born

FOR SHEER UNORTHODOXY, the Johnnie Ray story probably has no parallel in entertainment history.

Today Johnnie is acknowledged to be a major entertainment star throughout the English-speaking world. It is astonishing to realize that his stardom as a public fact is just four years old, dating only from 1951. Considering that Johnnie, compared with a Crosby or Sinatra, is still relatively a newcomer, how has he established himself so solidly?

Johnnie today (opp. p.) *at London's Palladium*



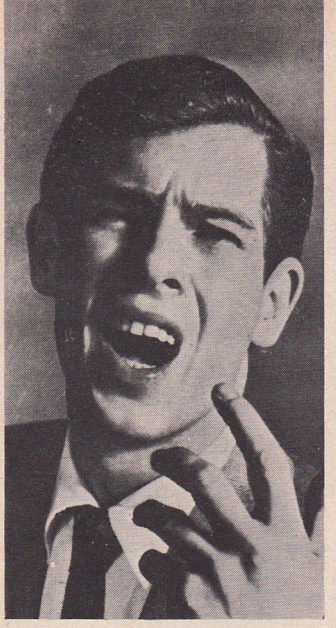
Qn this page, Johnnie as he conquered New York's Copacabana in 1952

Where did he come from, furthermore—and even more interesting, *how* did he arrive?

Johnnie's apprenticeship as a performer escapes all the usual formulas. He was not groomed for years by a name band. He was not nursed by Hollywood or conveniently discovered by TV. Unheralded by the star-gazers of show business, Johnnie is probably the first major entertainment personality to be produced by four combined background influences.

First, of course, there is Johnnie's fantastic gift for communicating naked emotion in a song. Few of us will ever forget how he literally burst from the nation's jukeboxes with *Cry*. So unexpected, so uninhibited that at first it was almost embarrassing, within a few months Johnnie's style had swept the country, and it was soon impossible to imagine the contemporary entertainment world without it.

Second, Columbia Records and the jukebox industry can justly claim to be the chief public instruments of Johnnie's overnight celebrity. Of equal importance, the third influence was the early faith of a few professional associates and disc-jockeys who had the insight to recognize a new and original entertainment talent of major importance. Fourth and far from least of the influences in the Johnnie Ray story are his fans. From the first they responded to the dedication apparent in Johnnie's performance with an equal dedication of their own. To their eternal credit be it said that they recognized and rewarded Johnnie's gift long before their elders finally got the message.

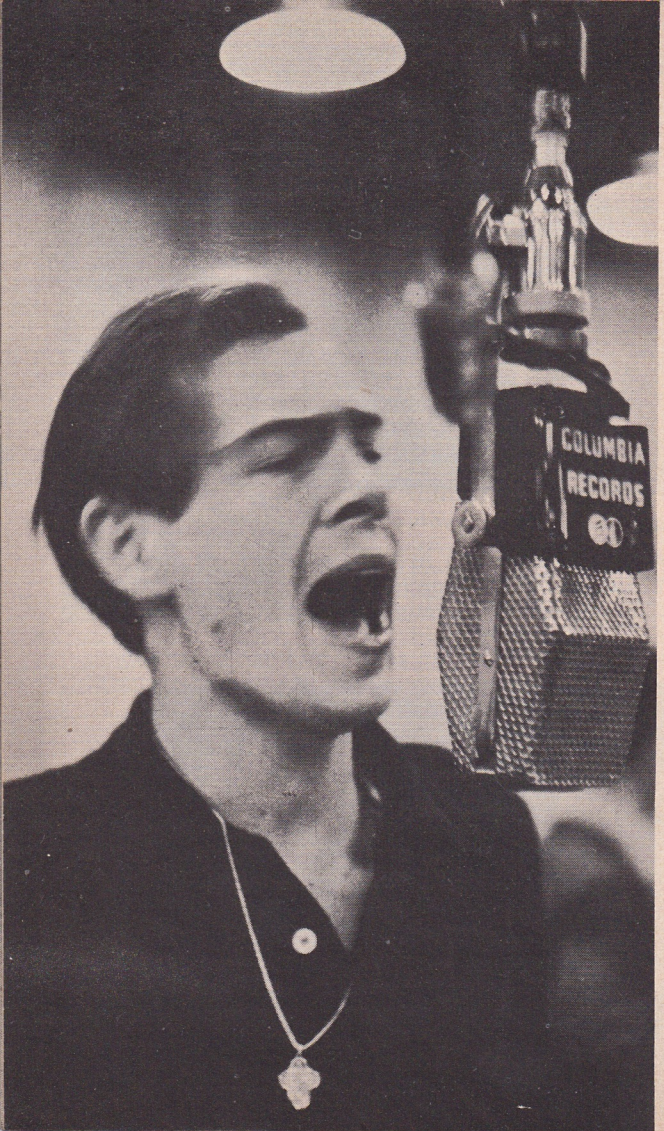


A closeup (left) *of a facial expression famous for its troubled intensity*

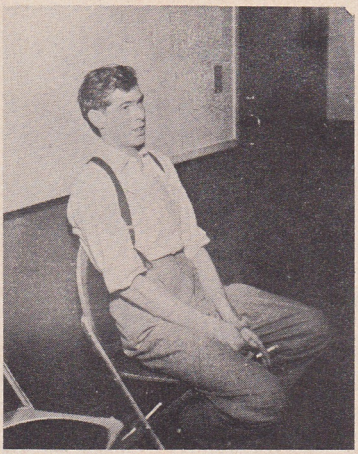
Today any of Johnnie's fans can give you the familiar preliminaries of his story. It began 28 years ago in an Oregon small town, far from the big-time night life in which he was later to play so brilliant a part. Johnnie's mother insists he picked out a piano version of *Rock of Ages* at three, but Johnnie doesn't pretend to recall that. Amusingly, his sister reports that as a boy he sang everything at the top of his lungs, earning himself the frequent admonition, "Stop yelling!"

A boyhood accident deprived Johnnie of 50 percent of his hearing—a fact that went undiscovered for several years. But his resulting isolation and loneliness, coupled with the boy's intensely affectionate nature, perhaps explain the essential feature of his later performing style—which is an explosive need to communicate his innermost emotions to others.

With Dorothy Kilgallen and Arlene Francis of What's My Line?" (above) *and Milton Berle and Marilyn Morrison* (below), *Johnnie enjoys parody of his style*


COLUMBIA
RECORDS

PART TWO



Johnnie waits for a playback

Mr. Emotion on Wax

AT 17, JOHNNIE LEFT HOME, heading for California and seven strenuous years as an unknown. He worked as a bellhop, a carhop, a soda-jerk. His first bit part in a movie wound up on the cutting-room floor, and his first brief nightclub stint earned him only tips. Then he hit the long, slow and often dreary nightery trail through the Midwest, playing the small clubs for even smaller salaries. Calling it "necessary experience" didn't make it less lonely or less discouraging. These were the

At Columbia's mike (opp. p.), *Johnnie at work*

years of pent-up feeling that can still be heard in the tremendous emotional release of Johnnie's first records. And it was also the period when Johnnie expressed his longing and frustration in more than a hundred songs of his own creation —among them *The Little White Cloud That Cried, Tell the Lady I Said Good-by,* and *Whiskey and Gin* (all of which were later huge hits less than a year after Johnnie recorded them).

Johnnie was in fact slowly edging East, head-

With Mitch Miller, chief of Columbia's Popular Record Division, Johnnie ponders a thorny recording problem

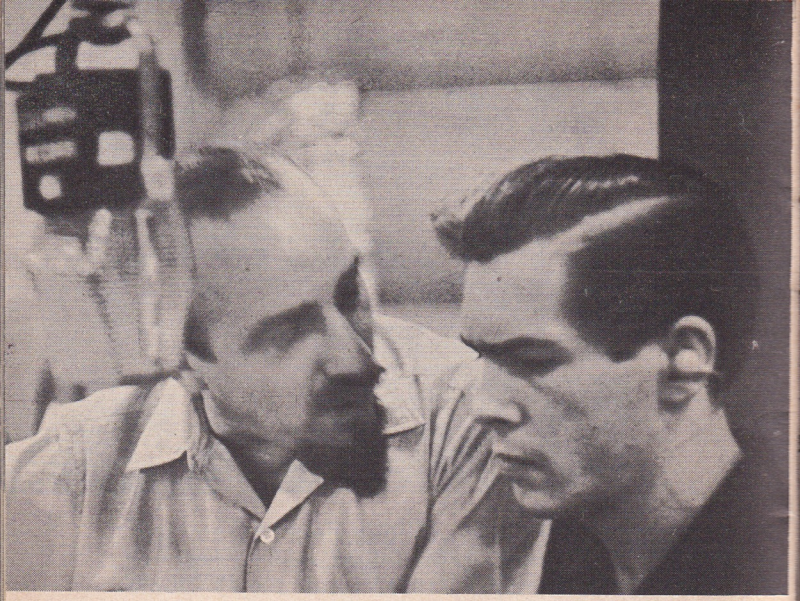
Johnnie chats (left) *with The Four Lads —the quartette which backs him on several records. With his conductor, Jimmy Carroll* (opp.), *during a recording take*

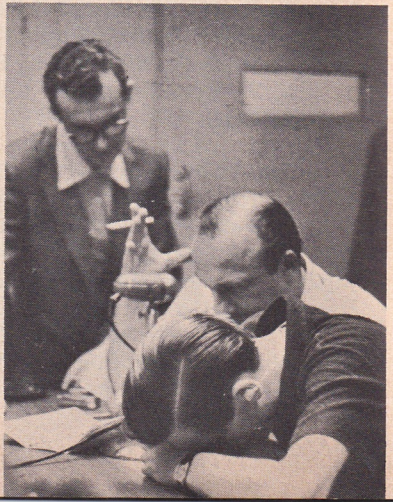
ing for New York. And it was during this moment of Midwestern oblivion that fate decreed he should indeed reach New York—not as a kid singer with a style too unfamiliar to be popular, but as a full-fledged star with a national following. Only fate could have worked out the next moves in Johnnie's career—none of them very impressive-looking at the moment, but secretly constituting the big break for which he had so blindly and fervently prepared himself.

Bernie Lang (soon thereafter to become Johnnie's chief professional associate and personal manager) was just then working the Midwest radio stations as a song-plugger. By chance, he heard some of Johnnie's songs. His interest in them was followed by an even greater interest in the way Johnnie delivered them. Bernie came to a decision. He took on the unknown singer as a full-time job. Through his contacts at General Artists' Corporation (a huge

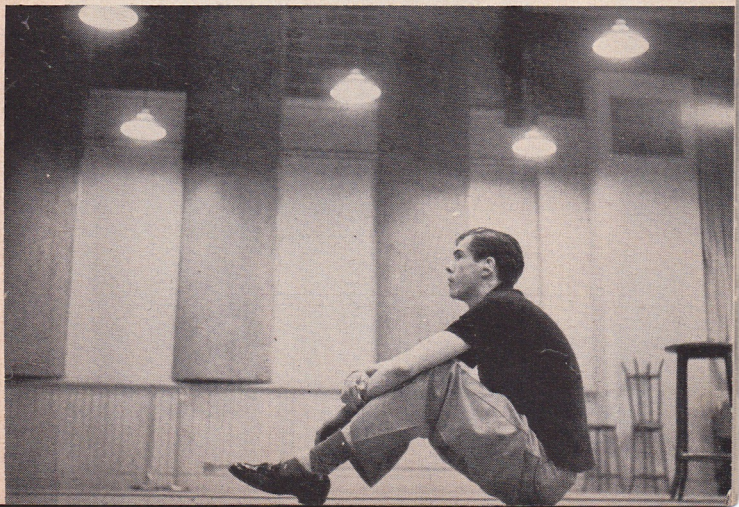
booking agency), Bernie put Johnnie on tour through the country's minor clubs. And at Detroit's Flame Club, in April, 1951, local deejay Robin Seymour happened to catch Johnnie's act. He brought Danny Kessler of Columbia Records to hear "a guy with the most original and most impressive style in years." Three weeks later, Johnnie was on a New York-bound plane, headed for his first recording date.

For his second recording session, Columbia's Mitch Miller was inspired to back Johnnie's *Little White Cloud* with an odd sleeper of a song called *Cry* (it was composed by an unknown night-watchman). The result, thanks to the Midwestern deejays—who were spark-plugged by Cleveland's Bill Randle—was a national jukebox revolution. *Cry* alone sold over two million copies, followed by more than three million of Johnnie's other platters. *Billboard* tipped off its readers to watch for "a kid

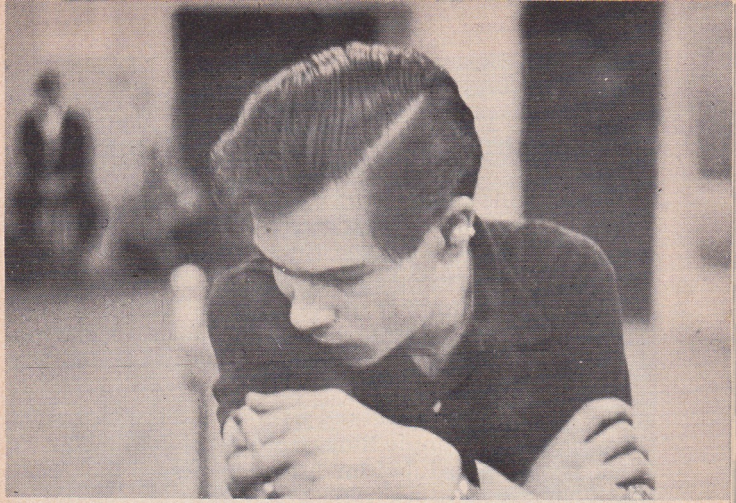




With Mitch Miller (above), *and Mitch and Bernie Lang* (below), *Johnnie reveals the strain of a recording session. In Columbia's vast recording studio* (opp.), *two informal studies*



COLUMBIA
RECORDS



Johnnie near the end of a session (opp.)
and reviewing a playback (above)

named Johnnie Ray . . . *he's electrifying!*" A night-club owner who neglected for three days to sign a Ray contract (on the grounds that Johnnie was a newcomer) found the asking price jumped from $500 a week to $1,500.

Thus it was the Midwest, its night spots and dee-jays and teen-age fans, who first discovered Johnnie Ray. The fact wasn't lost on some of Johnnie's nervous rivals, who described his style as a crazy gimmick and predicted that he'd fall flat on his face in the sophisticated East.

Johnnie gave them his answer just one year after his appearance as an unknown in Detroit's Flame Club. In April of 1952, he became the darling of New York's carriage trade at the Copacabana. And his asking price left the $1,500-a-week bracket and headed for its present one—ten times that.

RECORDS THAT MADE MUSICAL HISTORY

The following is a complete list of Johnnie's records—the only complete published list, incidentally, available at the present time.

The first four titles will be found on the Okeh label, the name of the Columbia subsidiary for which Johnnie made his first historic recordings. The balance, beginning with 39636, are on the Columbia label.

The nine titles marked with an asterisk are songs written by Johnnie himself. More of Johnnie's own songs are scheduled for future release.

The titles below offer considerable evidence of Johnnie's effect on the Hit Parade (and consequently on America's musical taste) in the last four years. In addition to new songs by Johnnie and others, you'll find old and long-disused titles that were turned into fresh hits by Johnnie's treatment. Their total sales are now headed for the ten million mark. In an industry where a total sale of 200,000 is considered a hit, it's worthy of note that the *initial sale* of all Johnnie's releases ranges from 100,000 to 200,000.

It has been observed that some of the most significant facts about the history of any era are reflected in the popular music it loves best. It seems evident that a generation which finds expression and release in the art of Johnnie Ray will retain this list of records in its emotional biography for years to come.

Here are Johnnie's records in the order in which they appeared, his most recent releases at the end:

From Columbia president James B. Conkling, Johnnie and Mitch Miller receive their golden records of Cry *as sales of the famous hit pass the million mark*

6809 *Tell the Lady I Said Good-by**
*. . . Whiskey and Gin**
6840 *Cry . . . The Little White Cloud That Cried**
39636 *Please Mr. Sun . . .*
Broken Hearted
39698 *What's the Use? . . .*
*Mountains in the Moonlight**
39700 *Don't Blame Me . . .*
*Coffee and Cigarettes**
39701 *Walkin' My Baby Back Home*
. . . Out in the Cold Again
39702 *Don't Take Your Love From Me*
*The Lady Drinks Champagne**
39703 *All of Me . . . Give Me Time*
39750 *Walkin' My Baby Back Home*
. . . Give Me Time
39788 *All of Me . . . A Sinner Am I**
39814 *Gee, but I'm Lonesome . . .*
Don't Say Love Has Ended
39837 *Faith Can Move Mountains . . .*
Love Me
39898 *Ma Says, Pa Says . . .*
A Full-Time Job
(both with Doris Day)
39908 *The Touch of God's Hand . . .*
I'm Gonna Walk and Talk With the Lord
39939 *Oh, What a Sad, Sad Day . . .*
Mister Midnight
39961 *Glad Rag Doll . . .*
Somebody Stole My Gal
40001 *Let's Walk That-a-way* (with Doris Day) *. . . Candy Lips*
40006 *With These Hands . . . Satisfied*

40020 *Such a Night . . . Destiny**
40024 *Hey There . . .*
Hernando's Hideaway
40046 *Tell the Lady I Said Good-by*
. . . All I Do Is Dream of You
40090 *Please Don't Talk About Me*
When I'm Gone . . .
An Orchid for the Lady
40154 *Why Should I Be Sorry . . .*
You'd Be Surprised
40252 *To Every Girl—To Every Boy*
. . . Going—Going—Gone
40324 *Papa Loves Mambo . . .*
The Only Girl I'll Ever Love
40391 *If You Believe . . .*
Alexander's Ragtime Band
40392 *As Time Goes By . . .*
Nobody's Sweetheart
40435 *Paths of Paradise* . . .*
Parade of Broken Hearts
40471 *Flip, Flop and Fly . . .*
Thine Eyes Are as the Eyes of a Dove

Extended Play Album:
B-1635 . . .*Johnny Ray Spotlight*
LP Album:
CL 6199 . . . *Johnny Ray* (including *Don't Blame Me . . . Walkin' My Baby Back Home . . . Don't Take Your Love From Me . . . All of Me . . . Give Me Time . . . The Lady Drinks Champagne . . . Out in the Cold Again . . . Coffee and Cigarettes*)

PART THREE

Newlyweds at New York's Copa

The Wedding

AFTER JOHNNIE'S long battle for recognition, his desire for marriage as a kind of refuge came as no surprise to anyone who understood his oft-expressed longing for happiness and stability, for peace within himself.

Yet in a sense a great performer is married first of all to his work and his public. It takes experience and maturity for a popular idol to achieve a private self—one which can be preserved from the world and devoted to a mate. Today Johnnie's great public

Johnnie and the new Mrs. Ray (the former Marilyn Morrison) with New York's Mayor Impelliteri (above, r.) *who attended the ceremony. Fans waited two hours* (below) *for glimpse of newlyweds*

understands that two fine young people simply were not ready to cope with the special difficulties created by Johnnie's career. When, shortly after their divorce, Johnnie and Marilyn met as good friends, the world noted, approved, and wished them well.

Johnnie carries Marilyn (opp.) *across threshold to reception. Wedding toast is drunk by Johnnie and Marilyn* (l.), *and their parents (the Rays,* below, l., *and Morrisons,* r.)

PART FOUR

Johnnie and Mitzi Gaynor

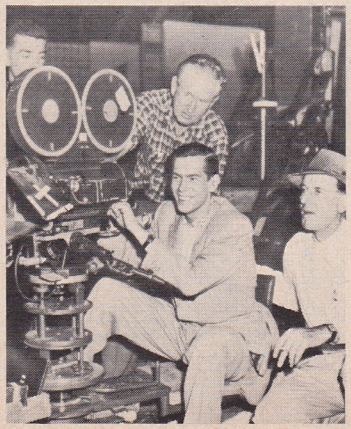
"Show Business"

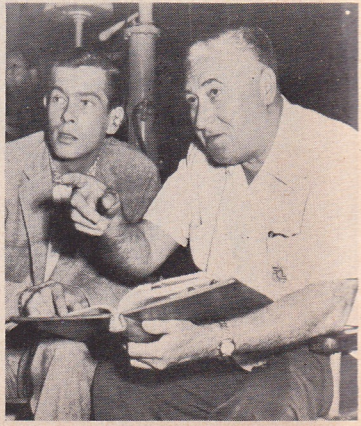
JOHNNIE RAY WAS BORN for show business if anyone ever was. "They can knock my voice," he once remarked, "but they've got to admit I'm a showman. Maybe not the greatest showman yet — but someday I will be."

Anyone who has ever seen Johnnie work on a nightclub floor knows that when the movies capture

In a scene (opp.) *from* No Business Like Show Business

On Show Business *set* (above), *a candid shot of Johnnie visiting with Ethel Merman, Dan Dailey and Mitzi Gaynor*





that side of him, the neighborhood box offices will repeat the jukebox landslide of four years ago. In fact, as any fan could tell Hollywood, the Johnnie Ray story would make a tremendous movie itself, as Jolson's did.

Meanwhile, times have changed since Johnnie's brief bit in *A Place in the Sun* wound up on the cutting room floor. In 20th-Fox's production of Irving Berlin's *There's No Business Like Show Business,* the ex-farmboy from Dallas, Oregon, is starred with such theatrical greats as Ethel Merman and Dan Dailey. And Johnnie's two magnificent songs from the show, *If You Believe* and *Alexander's Ragtime Band,* are available on a single record—the essence of show business on wax.

In movie scene (l.), *Johnnie meets Marilyn Monroe. With director Walter Lang* (next left) *and camera crew* (far left)

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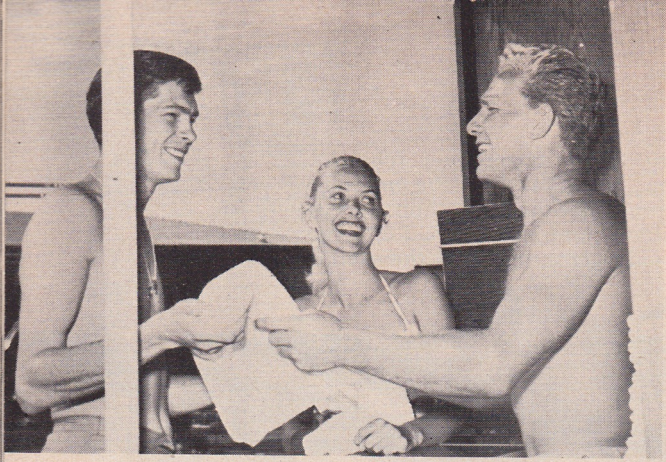
STILL FRIENDS

In January, 1954, a bleak-faced Johnnie (opp., above) *reflects the emotional stress of his divorce. Months later* (opp. and below) *Johnnie and Marilyn met affectionately, denied re-marriage plans, declared themselves "just buddies"*



HOLIDAY

A tremendous hit at Las Vegas' Desert Inn, Johnnie took advantage of the pool (above, opp.) *to swim and sun with a friend. The holiday also hospitalized him with a foot infection* (left) *that brought ex-wife Marilyn to his side*

PART FIVE

Johnnie and Charlotte Austin

The New Johnnie

IF YOU HAVE SEEN the recent pictures of Johnnie—Johnnie enjoying nightclub relaxation with show people, Johnnie busily filling engagements in the top theaters and variety halls and nightclubs across the world—you have already seen the new Johnnie Ray. A young man less moody, less restless, more "at peace" (to use Johnnie's phrase) and prepared to greet life with a smile.

And if you have heard his recent records, whether a tender love song, a heavy ballad, or a return to

his early rhythm-and-blues style with a terrific beat like *Flip, Flop and Fly*, his latest release—if you have heard any of these, you've also *heard* the new Johnnie Ray.

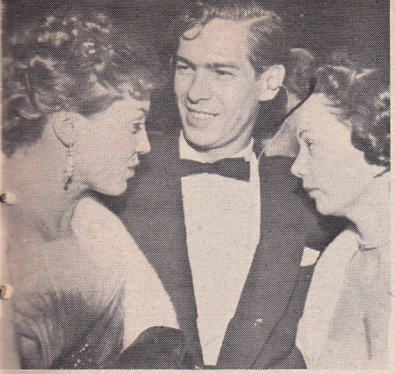
All the early emotion, the revival-shout fervor, is still there—plus. The plus is a new kind of control and authority which come from four great years of professional success. Today Johnnie produces as much effect on his listeners as he ever did (in some cases more, if you've noticed the news pictures from Australia!), and he does it without tearing himself to pieces in the process.

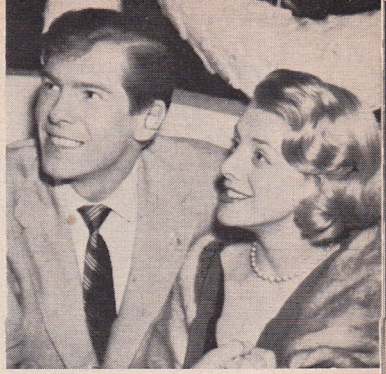
The plain fact is that Johnnie, who arrived four years ago as a public success, has also arrived in the opinion of a more critical tribunal—his professional rivals. To their credit be it said that they were the first, about a year ago, to note the increased

Rose Marie, John Carroll, Johnnie and Ella Logan (below) *enliven a Hollywood costume party*

On these pages, Johnnie squires comedienne Jane Kean (above, l.) *and Marilyn Monroe* (r.) . . .

. . . *goes to a party with Charlotte Austin* (l.) *and clowns with Mitzi Gaynor* (r.) . . .





. . . attends Marion Davies $30,000 party for him (l.) *and nightclubs with Rosemary Clooney* (r.)

expertness of his delivery, the increased range and solidity of his style. And today Johnnie has given his answer to those others who, even a year ago, were still insisting that his popularity was a "passing craze."

Johnnie is not only here to stay, but he has become something of a showman's showman, admired for his technique and sheer performance know-how. He has won his place in the great tradition of popular artists whose specialty is all-out self-communication, and if you discuss him in the same breath with Al Jolson on the one hand and the great blues-shoutin' Bessie Smith on the other, you'll be on the right track, both stylistically and as regards his stature in the entertainment world.

In '52, a critic asked whether Johnnie's $400,000 annual income would "dilute" his style, turning him into a "one-year wonder." Well, by now he should know.

PART SIX

Johnnie, his mother and sister

A Visit Home

THE HOME AND FAMILY Johnnie left behind at 17 are seldom far from his thoughts.

"We are a very loving family," he has confessed, "and not afraid to show our love. Mom has always been my best friend and always on my side no matter what—even when I sang in saloons, which she doesn't like."

In addition to his deep attachment to his married sister Elma, Johnnie has always had a profound respect for her integrity. He credits Elma with form-

Arriving at farm (above, l.), *Johnnie is greeted by father, sister Elma, and Collie named Sport. Dad gets Johnnie up* (below, l.) *and Mom supervises unpacking* (r.)

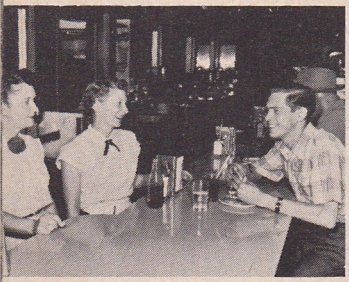
ing his own conception of sincerity—a quality of great importance to a performer, since audiences always revert to it in explaining their long-time preferences.

The farm on which Johnnie was born, January 10, 1927, was near Dallas, Oregon. Later, in Dallas proper, Johnnie's father worked as a millwright. In Portland during the war, where Mr. Ray worked as a welder, Johnnie not only graduated from high school but did a welding stint himself.

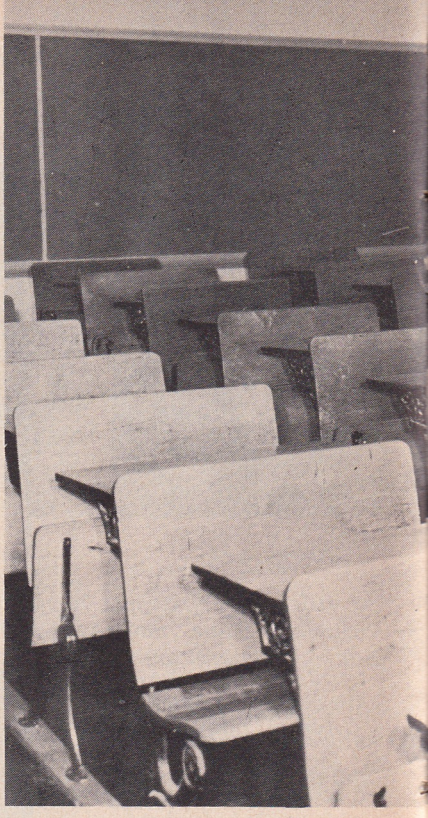
Johnnie's mother (whose grandmother was a full-blooded Blackfoot Indian) sang in church choirs and played the piano, while his father's musical instincts were expressed in his spare-time fiddling at barn dances.

Johnnie's success enabled him to realize a youth-

Johnnie recalls old times feeding chickens (opp.), *taking Sport hunting* (above), *and getting in a supply of firelogs from the woodshed*



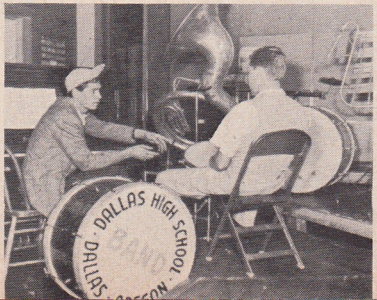
At soda fountain (above), Johnnie renews childhood acquaintance



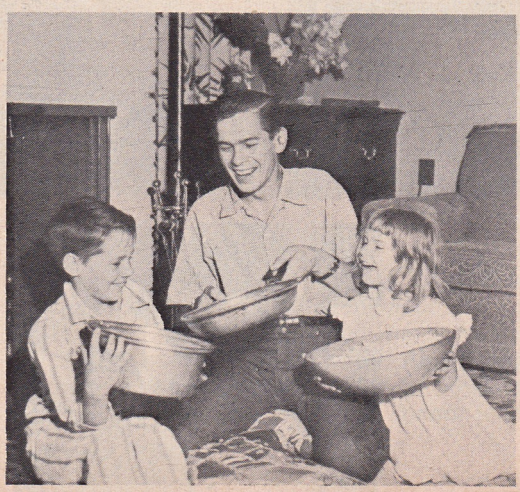
On a nostalgic pilgrimage to his boyhood school, Johnnie tries his old desk.

ful dream when he recently bought his family a farm in Roseberg, Oregon, near the scenes of his boyhood. Today, wherever he is in the world, he phones his family regularly. And though his work seldom permits it, he's happiest when he can pay a flying visit home.

Johnnie brushes up (r.) *on recent history of old High School Band*



At table with assembled family, Johnnie has old-fashioned farm dinner (above), *later pops corn with niece and nephew. Finally he sits alone at organ* (opp.) *with mother's hymnal*



PART SEVEN

A loyal fan rewarded in person

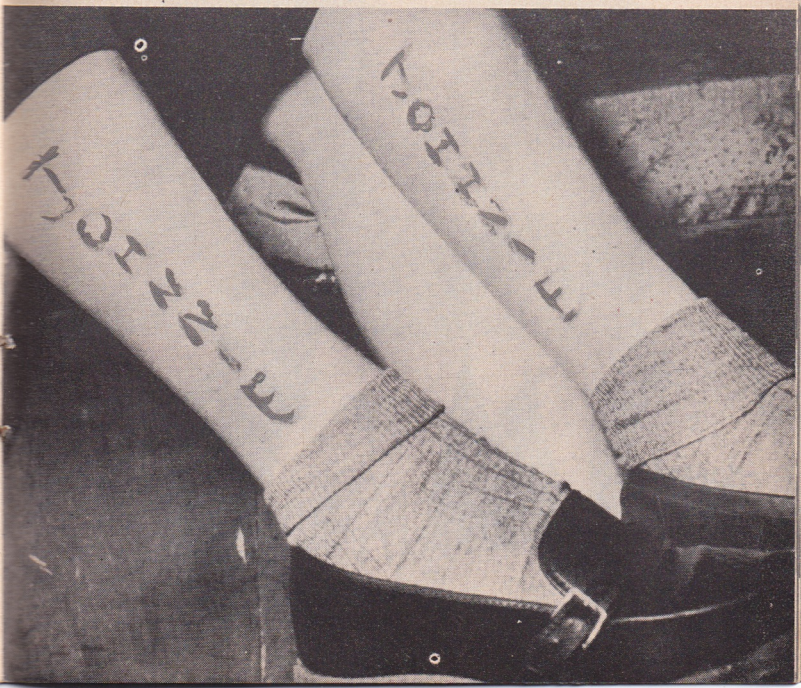
Johnnie's Fans

JOHNNIE WILL NEVER forget the week in 1951 when he made his first important personal appearances during his engagement at Moe's Main Street in Cleveland (where his first fan club was formed). Deejay Bill Randle took him to block parties, teenager clubs, high schools, community centers, introducing the dazed young singer to vast crowds of fans he never knew he possessed. Their

eager enthusiasm and affection broke him up then —and still do. "What can you say?" he asks wonderingly. "It murders you!"

Since those days, it has become a police department commonplace in many countries to have riot squads stand by for his personal appearances, and

With lipstick lettering, fans become Johnnie-soxers

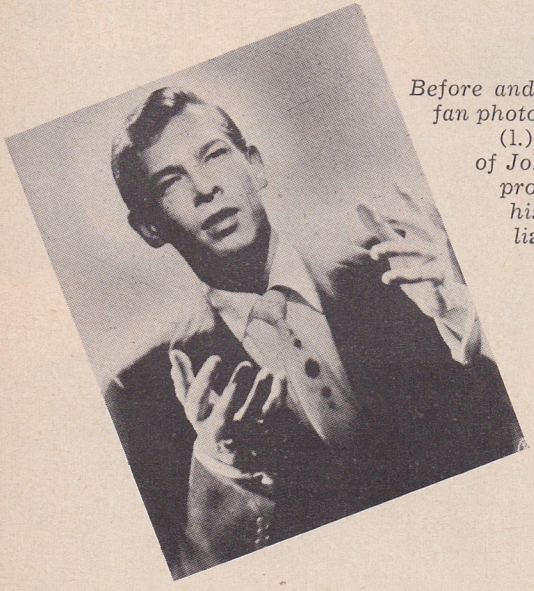


Responsibility toward fans can go no further. Johnnie solaced this Brooklyn teenager at his wedding

Last year these Essex, England fans (below) *greeted Johnnie in fan sweaters on his first London date*

Johnnie is gratefully resigned to having fans cut his clothing and bid for his restaurant silverware as souvenirs.

Johnnie's fans today are numbered in the hundreds of thousands (with more than 1,800 active clubs), and they are noted for *not* cross-joining into the clubs of other personalities. When they join a Johnnie Ray club, that's the whole story, fanwise.

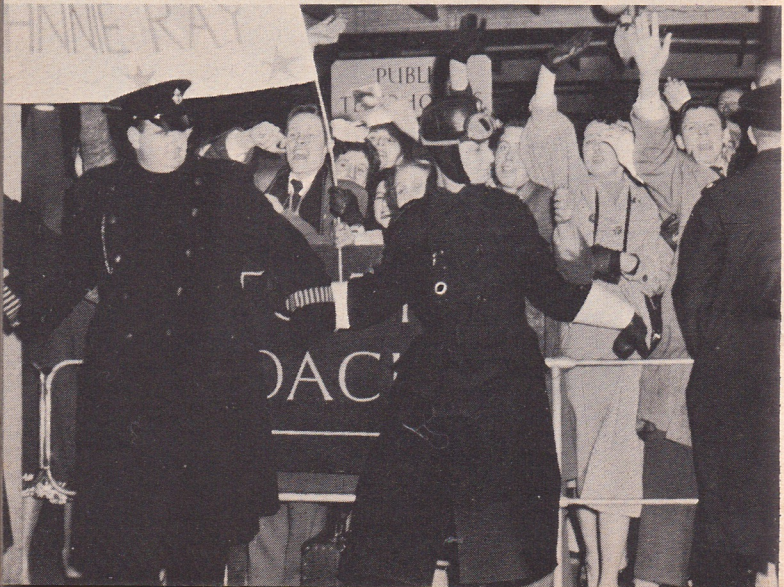


Before and after: a favorite fan photograph of Johnnie (l.), and a press shot of Johnnie with police protection (r.) after his adoring Australian fans welcomed him to Sydney

(Note: fans desiring to join a Johnnie Ray club should write to his manager, Mr. Bernard Lang, Suite 1210, 1650 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.).

Two songs Johnnie recently recorded—*To Every Girl, To Every Boy* and *The Only Girl I'll Ever Love* were written by one of his fans, a boy of 16 named Jerry Samuels. Thanks to Johnnie, Jerry already has a great start toward his career. And Johnnie is grateful to repay a tiny part of the debt he owes to the fans who first lifted him from obscurity.

M. C. A. OFFICES
TONNIE
RAY
FAN


NNIE RAY
PUBLI
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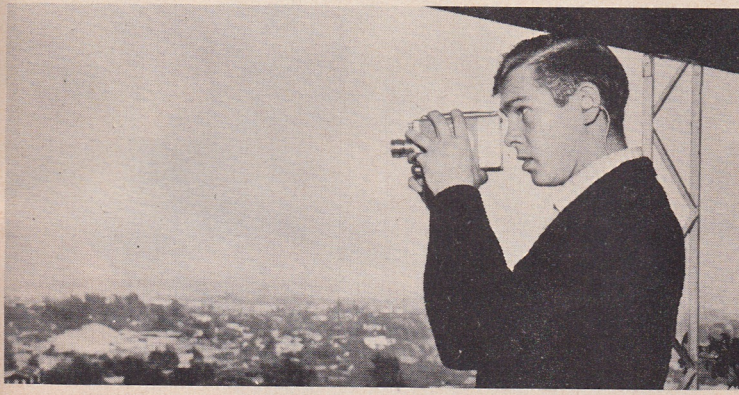
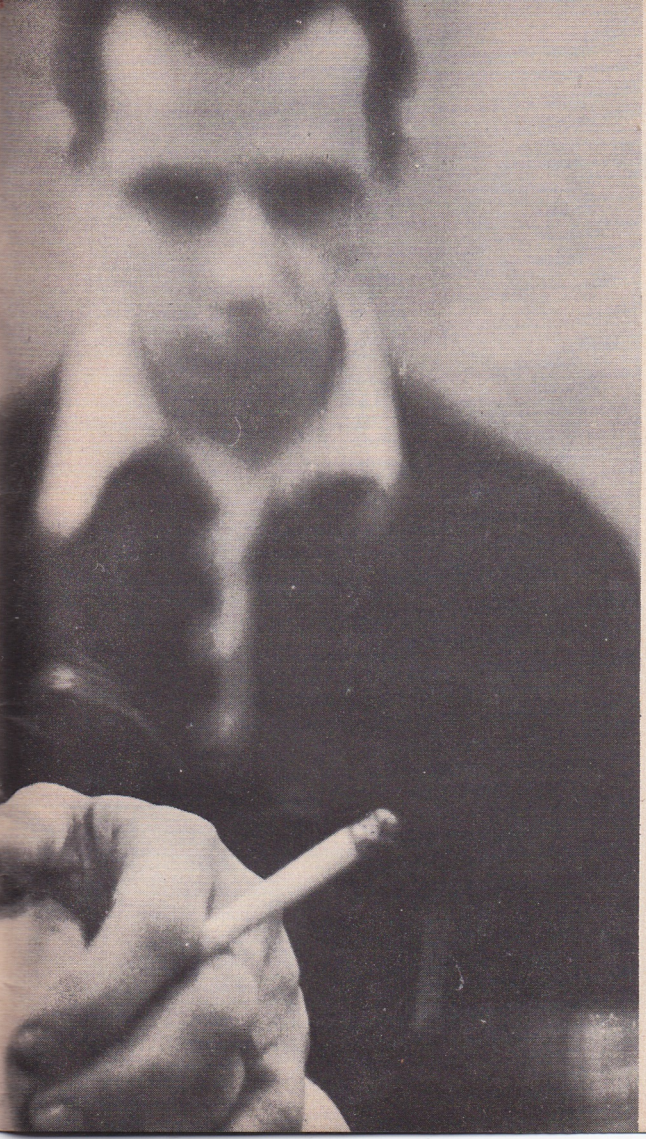
On these pages, Johnnie greets the London fans who acclaimed him (from behind police cordon) on his recent return from an Australian tour

The Voice (below) *beams Johnnie to Brazil*

Johnnie signs autograph (left) for a young admirer in his home town music store

Johnnie keeps 8 mm. record of his travels





MY FAVORITE PICTURE OF JOHNNIE RAY

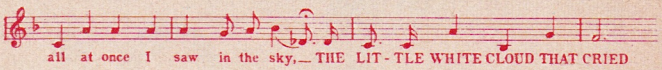
This space is reserved for your own personal preference among Johnnie's pictures. It will look attractive if you paste it within the boxed lines. Below there is a line on which to sign your own name—and below that is a space for Johnnie's autograph (good luck in getting one!). The following page is for your list of Johnnie's records and the autographs of your Johnnie Ray fan friends.

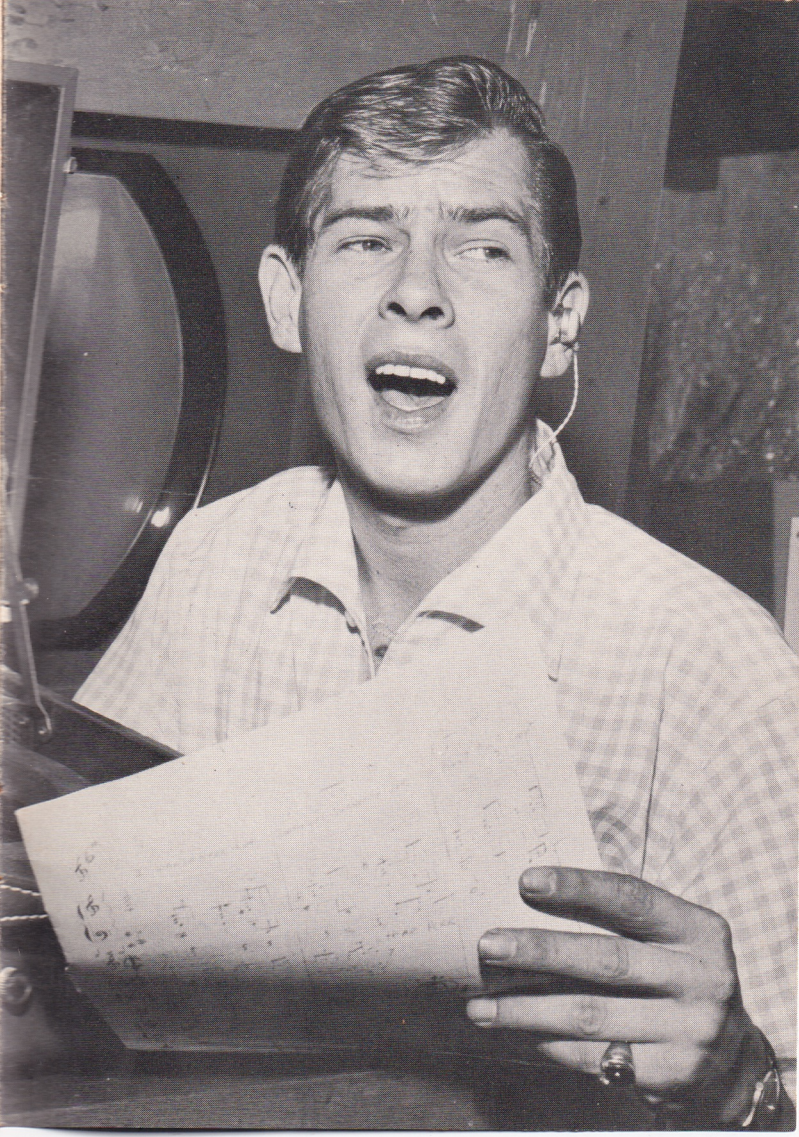
Autographed for

_____

Date _____

RECORDS AND AUTOGRAPHS



Written and produced by
CLIFFORD ROBERTS

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